

2020 Recreation Realignment Project Information

Ozark-St. Francis National Forests - Big Piney Ranger District

Recently, the Forest Service released a draft Environmental Assessment seeking comments on a proposal to make changes to management of Haw Creek campground, Bayou Bluff campground and Alum Cove scenic area. This proposal is needed to more efficiently meet the needs of Forest visitors, address changing resource management priorities, and ensure sustainability of public lands. The proposed changes would eliminate the need for seasonal closures, and would make the areas accessible to the public year-round.

While some erroneous information has been shared on social media, we have provided a brief summary of the actual proposal below. The attached link contains project information and highlights multiple ways to comment on the Forest Service proposal:

<https://www.fs.usda.gov/project/?project=57074>

The following bullets summarize the proposal for each of the three sites:

- **Haw Creek Campground** would be converted to a point of interest with no fees and be open year round. Dispersed day use, such as picnicking and overnight camping, would be allowed at Haw Creek. Trash cans/receptacles would be removed immediately, so it would be incumbent on everyone that uses the area to take their trash out with them in a “pack it in, pack it out” manner. The long-term result would be removing amenities such as picnic tables, fire rings, and lantern posts over time as they become unusable or unsafe, while allowing the public to enjoy the area as a dispersed recreation site.
- **Bayou Bluff Campground** has camp sites on two different levels and access roads. The upper level is proposed for closure and removal of all amenities, due to extremely low use. The lower level would be managed as a point of interest, retaining use of the vault toilet, large pavilion, the three shelters, and a small pavilion without fees. Bayou Bluff would allow dispersed day use in the lower loop. Trash cans/receptacles would be removed immediately, so it would be incumbent on everyone that uses the area to take their trash out with them in a “pack it in, pack it out” manner.
- **Alum Cove Recreation Area** would be converted to a trail head for backcountry hiking with no fees and be open year-round. Amenities that would remain open include: a pavilion, trail with benches and a vault toilet. Trash cans/receptacles would be removed immediately, so it would be incumbent on everyone that uses the area to take their trash out with them in a “pack it in, pack it out” manner. The long-term result would involve the removal of existing amenities over time as they become unusable or unsafe, while allowing the public to enjoy the area as a dispersed recreation site.

The end of the comment period on the Draft Environmental Assessment is December 27, 2019. Please submit all comments on the proposal by this date, either by postal mail, email, or on the project website.